BIODIVERSITY ISSUES AND APPROACHES FOR REDD+

Southeast Asia Regional Training Workshop on Social and Environmental Soundness of REDD+.
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Biodiversity and REDD+ - evolution of understanding

Initial assumptions made about the impact of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from tropical forests were largely positive: *'effective actions to reduce deforestation could constitute a unique opportunity for biodiversity protection*' (CBD Decision VIII/30). Six years on, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) now acknowledges that REDD+ offers unprecedented '*potential to simultaneously address the biodiversity crisis and climate change …while poorly designed REDD+ could damage biodiversity and in threaten provision of ecosystem services'* (SCDB 2011).

Opportunities and risks

The main generic opportunities for, and risks to, biodiversity presented by REDD+ can be summarized as:

OPPORTUNITY	RISK
Improved *in situ* conservation of forest biodiversity, particularly through improved protected area (PA) management and forest landscape restoration (FLR)	Conversion of natural forests to plantations and other land uses of low biodiversity value and low ecological resilience
Promotion of sustainable forest management in production forests, through such approaches as reduced impact logging or payments for ecosystem services (PES)	Displacement of deforestation and forest degradation to areas of lower carbon value and high biodiversity value
Promotion of forest governance improvements, through mechanisms such as more devolved forestland tenure and participatory management decision making processes	Afforestation in areas (non-forest ecosystems) of high biodiversity value
Improved monitoring and reporting systems needed to assess the impact of REDD+ on biodiversity, demonstrate safeguard compliance and obtain results-based financing	Indirect risks from social inequities, e.g. loss of traditional territories and restriction of rights of local people; lack of tangible livelihood benefits or equitable benefit sharing
Adapted from: Miles & Dickson (2010); SCBD (2011)	*Adapted from: UNEP/CBD/WS-REDD/1/3*

International policy commitments on REDD+ opportunities and risks to biodiversity

Acknowledging such opportunities and risks, further design considerations for the international REDD+ mechanism were safeguarded in the Cancun Agreements (UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16). Concurrent to the agreement on the safeguards, was the adoption of a new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, to operationalize the CBD from 2011 to 2020, in addition to 20 headline targets to be met by 2020. Five of these 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets' are directly relevant to REDD+.

Developing countries pursuing elaboration of national REDD+ programmes, all of which are signatories to the CBD,

Cancun safeguards relevant to biodiversity

- *[REDD+ activities] complement or are consistent with the objectives of national forest programmes and relevant international conventions and agreements*
- *[REDD+ activities are] consistent with the conservation of natural forests and biological diversity, ensuring that actions...are not used for the conversion of natural forests, but are instead used to incentivize the protection and conservation of natural forests…*
- *Actions to address the risks of [emissions reductions and enhanced removals] reversals*
- *Actions to reduce displacement of emissions*

Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant to REDD+

5 - rate of loss…forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero…degradation and fragmentation significantly reduced

7 - areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity

11 - at least 17 per cent of terrestrial…areas…, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through… systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures

14 - ecosystems that provide essential services…are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities…

15 - ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems...

now face the challenge of devising and implementing cost-effective mechanisms to realise the broad aspiration statements of intent, which are the Cancun safeguards, in addition to meeting the Aichi Targets.

National options for high-biodiversity REDD+

International policy research has identified six broad categories of policies and measures to turn the Cancun safeguards into an operational reality, and contribute to meeting Aichi Targets, through national REDD+ programme design and implementation (Swan & McNally 2011; Swan et al. 2011; Swan 2012):

1. National policy strengthening and coherence	2. Integrated and strengthened subnational planning
i) including explicit statements of biodiversity objectives in REDD+ strategies or programmes	i) socio-economic and land use planning
ii) incorporating biodiversity into low-carbon development strategies	ii) low-emissions development planning
iii) establishing inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder institutions to co-ordinate a participatory reform agenda	iii) forest protection and development planning
3. National safeguards	**4. Regulatory approaches**
i) review and reform existing policies, programmes, plans, processes, practices to meet international safeguards	i) establishing new, or strengthening existing, protected areas and corridors
ii) developing national safeguards based on one existing framework (SEPC; SES; SESA)	ii) promoting sustainable production forest management practices such as reduced impact logging
iii) adopting key elements of existing multilateral frameworks, based on assessment of benefits/ risks	iii) improving forest governance through tenure reform and devolution, e.g. community forestry management
5. Economic instruments	**6. Monitoring and reporting**
i) biodiversity premiums added to the payment for emission reductions	i) harmonised indicators for monitoring against REDD+ standards and biodiversity targets
ii) risk mitigation discount - downward adjustment in risk scores for demonstrable positive biodiversity impact	ii) participatory forest data collection, management and application for local management and national reporting
iii) front loading of payments so that a greater proportion is paid in the initial years while not changing total amount	iii) integrated monitoring systems for biodiversity and forestry

Emerging international policy incentives for higher biodiversity performance from REDD+

International policy agreements on biodiversity and REDD+, under both UNFCCC and CBD, continue to develop. UNFCCC decisions made in Durban (2011) include the receipt of results-based finance as conditional upon provision of information on how safeguards are being addressed and respected (Decision 2/CP.17, Paragraph 64). The CBD (2012) has issued recommendations and advice (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/24) on provision on relevant safeguards, in addition to identifying possible indicators and monitoring mechanisms for assessing the biodiversity impact of REDD+.

In recent months, public investors in REDD+ readiness have expressed appetite for a concerted move towards results-based action and away from proof-of-concept demonstration REDD+ pilots. Concurrently, a growing number of developing countries and international civil society organisations are articulating the need for broader definitions of results-based performance, which could include biodiversity. Negotiations on REDD+ financing modalities, for both near-term funding options and longer-term development of rules under the UNFCCC, could contribute to shaping the political (and potential economic) to demonstrate biodiversity performance from REDD+ beyond Cancun compliance.

Selected CBD documents

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UNEP/CBD/COP/11/24 (2012) *Advice on the application of relevant safeguards for biodiversity with regard to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+)*.

Conclusion

Investing in forest biodiversity conservation is crucial to the long-term success of REDD+. Biological diversity is the fundamental natural asset delivering carbon sequestration services. Ecologically stable (resistant and resilient) forests, with the evolutionary potential to adapt to a changing climate, are necessary to sequester atmospheric carbon over the long-term and minimise the risk of reversed emission reductions and/or enhanced removals. In addition to the normative ethical arguments (conserving biodiversity is the right thing to do), the business case for 'high-biodiversity' (and socially responsible) REDD+ can also be argued to be the best and most certain business case for REDD+ period.

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